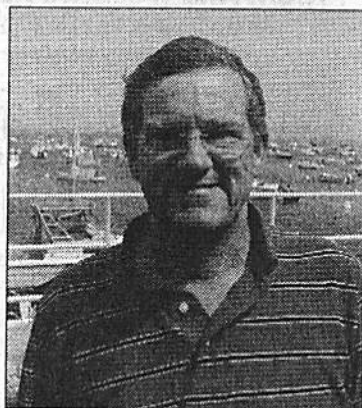


A visit with Chuck Leonard

By ANNE STEELE, CLIPPER INTERN

If you've ever set ground at Duxbury Bay Maritime School, you've seen Chuck Leonard. You might not know his name, but you've seen him – maybe toting students around the reaches of the bay, or maybe you've seen his feet sticking out from under a boat he's fixing, or teaching a sailing class – all before showing a generous donor around the picturesque campus. We chatted with Leonard, executive director of DBMS, about what he does – a little bit of everything – and why he loves his job.



DBMS Director Chuck Leonard.

How did you come to be executive director of DBMS?

When DBMS was originally founded, I was in the printing business and had been for many years. At the time, I owned a Cartridge World franchise in Weymouth and Anchor Press, a small commercial print shop in Norwell. One day, my predecessor, Ned Lawson, a friend from way back was in my shop getting a newsletter printed and was just leaving my Norwell office when I followed him out the door. I told him I was getting fidgety with my print shop, there must be something down at the waterfront I can do for the next chapter of my life. He grinned and said, 'Why don't you take my job?' A couple of years later, I sold my two businesses and started in 2008.

What do you do? Take me through a day with Chuck Leonard. I get the privilege of having such variety in my day – taking the ecology class on a lobster boat ride, teaching adult sailing lessons, running the parent launch on race days to name a few. Many days I wear an athletic director's hat because we have highly competitive high school sports of rowing and sailing. Additionally, I'm a manager of a great team of employees. I have finance and business background so am very involved with the budgeting process, finances and fundraising for

the school. I also get involved with maintenance and hauling of boats and floats (driving the forklift and travel lift are always fun).

What do you love most about your job? The most rewarding and satisfying part of this job is watching children learn and grow and develop sailing, rowing and ecology skills. Watching them grow to a point where they're good with teamwork in rowing, for instance, self-reliant in a sailboat, finding the creatures fun in ecology. In Accessail, seeing the smiles on the faces of those who are physically or cognitively handicapped when they go out for a sail. Watching the Crossroads for Kids campers going kayaking or sailing. Those are the main reasons I love to be here.

THE LEONARD FILE

Favorite movie: The Sound of Music

Favorite book: James Patterson murder mystery thrillers and Stephen King

Family: Wife, Harriet; daughters, Bethany and Julia

Pet peeve: Cleaning up after others

Hobbies: Sailing and wood-working

How long have you lived in Duxbury? Did you grow up here? My parents moved here when I was five. My parents and my grandparents on both sides were longtime residents of Duxbury. But I can't say I am a townie, because for five years, I wasn't here! I have many fond memories growing up on and around the Bay.

What's the hardest part of your job? The hardest job is definitely wearing the athletic directors hat. There's a gap between kids' abilities and levels versus where parents think they ought to be or are. That's the biggest challenge.

What's changed with the big renovation project? The school has become more efficient. For the first 11 years my predecessors took the time to build programs. Then we finally were able to build a building to go around it. It's a more efficient structure than the decrepit, dilapidated buildings that we were in before. The building gives good housing to the programs that were already built. If you saw the old buildings and make up on the property, it's pretty clear – we were a round peg in a square hole. We were making

it work because we had to. Our new building provides indoor classrooms and facilities for the huge volume of students we see every summer.

Anything particularly interesting happening this summer? DBMS and Island Creek Oysters are forming a partnership of sorts to open an oyster hatchery on campus. DBMS will be able to use this hatchery as a base to form after-school ecology classes for middle and high school students. This summer was experimental, but it has been successful. We also helped put together some camera boats for a production company doing an advertisement for Ralph Lauren. During two days of filming in Eagle's Nest they used about 12 420s. It was fun – and we managed to make some money for the school.

What do you think DBMS does for the community? We offer an incredible service to the community, access to the bay. Our school is very public in nature – there's nothing private about it. It's not exclusive; it's inclusive. People ages 3 to '83 can sign up for classes anytime. You can't find that in very many towns – we are one of the largest community sailing and rowing programs in the country.

What do you see in the near or further off future for DBMS? We're steadily growing and steady growth is good. We're about to launch into kite boarding and paddle boarding. One of the ideas is to do yoga on SUPs [stand up paddleboards]. We're getting close to maxing out on high tide activities while those can both be off peak tide. It's an area that can grow and has been growing around us anyway.

Tell me something we don't know about you. I'm just a tiny little piece of this awesome organization. My entire staff is a much more significant part of our school's success. They're outstanding and what we do here is incredible. I love every aspect of my job.